



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

*real places telling real stories*



# Becoming a Designated Main Street community & establishing a local program



# ! What is Main Street?



A specific strategy for volunteer-supported downtown revitalization in the context of historic preservation



Main Street is a nationally recognized and economically proven method for revitalization of historic downtowns all across America. Communities of all sizes nationwide participate. Main Street is a trademarked program of the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In most states, the Center has authorized an entity to carry out the Approach and to manage the Main Street brand on its behalf. In Texas, that entity is the Texas Main Street Program, which is part of the Texas Historical Commission, the state agency for historic preservation. Since the Approach and the brand are trademarked, a community may not operate or call itself a Main Street program or community, unless it has been designated as such through the Texas Historical Commission, and after applying for the designation through the formal application process.



Texas Main Street was one of the first coordinating programs in the U.S. when the national effort was rolled out almost 40 years ago. Since that time, the Texas program has grown into one of the largest in the nation, with 89 currently designated communities, and historical economic impact exceeding \$3.9 billion, of which about 60% has come from private sector investment into Main Street districts.





# **What is Main Street?**

## **Benefits of participation**

## **Local responsibilities**

## **Application process**



It is often the case that a community considers a Main Street application because ‘all else has failed.’ Local government, downtown owners of businesses and property, and even the community at large, may all agree that something needs to be done. Much of the historic downtown may be vacant, underutilized, or inhabitable due to years of neglect, or all of these conditions may exist together. Over the years, a variety of attempts may have been taken to turn things around. Perhaps these efforts – no matter how well-intentioned – did not stick. Perhaps local government attempted to stimulate downtown through infrastructure improvements and beautification projects. The local Chamber of Commerce may have created a downtown task force for local business development, or maybe the economic development corporation purchased and rehabilitated a few of the most endangered properties in downtown in hopes that they would find a useful and economically productive new life. But downtown still struggled.

Most cities that apply to Main Street have found themselves in similar situations. In fact, demonstrating need is part of the application process. And that is a reason to discuss both the history of Main Street – and why it came to be – and to introduce the Main Street Four Point Approach™ that designated Main Street communities all across the country use to carry out their work and see true economic results from their efforts.

What happened to cause the decline of downtowns? Many people older than 50 who grew up in the towns where they still live remember a downtown of constant activity. No matter how small the size of the community, chances were there was a department store, a hardware store, and the movie theater. The post office, city hall and the library were there, as were your doctor's offices.





Many factors contributed to the decentralization and marginalization of downtowns between the 1920s and the 1950s. These factors included the growth of population following World War II and the subsequent need for housing that gave rise to suburbia where alternative choices for shopping and working existed. Increasing affordability and access to automobiles, and development of the highway system in the 1950s gave people more choices and independence than they ever had before. Federal urban renewal programs also severely impacted traditional downtowns – especially in urban areas – through the widespread clearance of areas of ‘slum and blight.’ All of this fueled the decline and abandonment of traditional downtowns.

# Over time, downtowns were 'modified,' then abandoned

- Lack of understanding as to the value of 'everyday' commercial structures, their economic value
- No true field of revitalization, rehabilitation, preservation
- No centralized effort to do anything



# Realities

- Something had to be done; who would step forward?
- Local government couldn't do it on their own.
- Had to be a whole-community effort, not a government program.
- Quick results alone would not be the answer.
- There had to be a long-term view/progress over time.
- Local government had limited resources; it needed to be leveraged.



The program that was first rolled out in the 1970s and 1980s to address the realities of the state of downtowns at that time continues today and is one of the most impactful economic development models for small, rural towns and urban centers alike. In Texas, the state authority continues to be the Texas Main Street Program, operating in affiliation with Main Street America™, the National Main Street Center.



- Historic preservation as proven economic development through small business development
- Volunteer effort, volunteer leadership
- A framework & a process
- Partners working together for the common good
- Expectation of results
- Sustainability of effort
- Collective wisdom



# The Main Street Four Point Approach™



The Texas Main Street Program provides services to designated Main Street communities in these focus areas as part of a holistic Main Street revitalization process.



# Preservation-based downtown revitalization is used to create localized economic development

- Targeted financing to achieve strategic economic goals
- Development of entrepreneurship and small, independent businesses in the historic marketplace





Design ..  
the physical  
downtown  
Planning..  
tools

- The environment
- Preserving historic character
- Physical context for new development
- Property stewardship and/or enforcement
- Beautification, aesthetic enhancement



Economic Vitality  
Design

Promotion

# Making downtown lively...

- Retail
- Celebrating heritage
- Special & Signature events
- Bringing people downtown
- Image building, branding

**Shop, Dine, Enjoy**

Whether it's for a night out on the town, antiques or a weekend escape, people head to McKinney for its downtown historic district. Generations have shopped, worked, lived and enjoyed some of life's milestones in the same buildings that today make up the vibrant downtown.

It's still a place to gather, with its sophisticated charm, and eclectic shopping and dining culinary scene, and serving as the city's unofficial center of leisure and play. This coming together of new and old, historic and trend-setting, daytime, nightlife and nightlife activities embodies the spirit of McKinney and what makes it unique.

The walkable square and immediately neighboring streets encompass one of the oldest authentic and thriving downtown areas in Texas. Downtown is not just a location, it's a destination.

**Downtown McKinney Texas SHOPPERS GUIDE**

McKinney Main Street  
972-543-3660  
[www.downtownmckinney.com](http://www.downtownmckinney.com)

City of McKinney  
972-547-7900  
[www.mckinneytexas.org](http://www.mckinneytexas.org)

Convention & Visitors Bureau  
214-544-1407  
[www.visitmckinney.com](http://www.visitmckinney.com)

McKinney Chamber  
972-543-0903  
[www.mckinneychamber.com](http://www.mckinneychamber.com)

**Historic Downtown McKinney, TX**

[www.DowntownMcKinney.com](http://www.DowntownMcKinney.com)

**\$11.00  
DENTON!**

**Shop Here On Purpose**





People coming together for a common purpose and an organization focused on consistently driving toward that vision

- Staffing
- Advisory Board
- Mission-driven
- Partnership oriented





# Benefits of participation



# Connection to the Main Street Brand and Trademark





Texas Main Street is a provider of services to designated Main Street programs. A staff of nine includes professionals who provide technical assistance directly to local programs, and local property and business owners, in the areas of economic development; entrepreneurship; program management; leadership development; design /architecture and preservation; urban planning; and professional development/resources.

Local government pays a modest annual administrative fee to participate, which makes it possible for all services to be provided continuously and at no cost to business/property owners.

The benefit of belonging to the network of 89 Texas cities of all sizes includes:

- Resource and knowledge sharing
- Communications platforms
  - Online library
  - Listserv
  - Main Street Matters
- Main Street-specific professional development
- Access to expertise
- Access to the Main Street Texas Capital Fund revitalization grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

<http://texasagriculture.gov/grantsservices/ruraleconomicdevelopment/texascapitalfund.aspx>



Texas Main Street communities are featured in [www.DowntownTX.org](http://www.DowntownTX.org), an inventory and economic development platform.

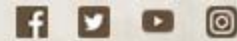


# **Local responsibilities and the Application process**





TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
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## Becoming a Main Street Community

### The Benefits and Application Process



The application process to become a Designated 2019 Texas Main Street community is now open. Please use [this link](#) to access the application. Applications to become a designated Main Street community are accepted once each year on the last working day of July. Please review the Main Street sections of this website or contact the Texas Main Street [State Coordinator](#) for information on the program or pertaining to completion of the application.

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/becoming-main-street-community>

## **Important dates for 2019 entrance:**

July 31, 2018: Applications due, 5 pm

October 23-24, 2018: Quarterly Commission meeting; new Main Street communities accepted

November 7-9, 2018: New Main Street communities are formally announced at the state downtown revitalization conference co-hosted by the Texas Downtown Association and the Texas Main Street Program

November-December: State office works with new local programs on hiring and program creation

January 1, 2019: Official entrance into the program



# **Application components/Scoring criteria**

**1. Historic commercial fabric and historic identity**—The historic significance/fabric of the proposed Main Street area and the interest in and commitment to historic preservation.

**2. Community and private sector support and organizational capacity**— Demonstrates community and private sector support for the program as well as the capability of the applicant to successfully implement the Main Street Program.

## **Ongoing local responsibilities**

Evidence of sensitive preservation efforts through tools and practices within the Main Street economic development program

Broad support for downtown and for the program is maintained. Volunteers, partners participate over time.

# Application

**3. Support and financial capacity**—Demonstrates the financial capability to employ a full-time manager, fund a local Main Street Program and support downtown-related projects.

**4. Physical capacity**—The cohesiveness, distinctiveness and variety of business activity conducted in the proposed Main Street Program area.

## Ongoing local responsibilities

Annual adopted budget funds staffing, operations

Program shows incremental growth and progress over time.

# Application

**5. Demonstrated need**—The need for the Main Street Program

**6. Geographic distribution/discretionary** -- Points for an application from a county where there are no currently designated Main Street programs, and additional miscellaneous points to signify notable representation of need; preservation or economic development effort; or financial capacity that goes beyond the minimum requested in the application.

## **Small-town (under 50,000 population):**

The Main Street manager is generally an employee of the city. One full-time employee is required.

Annual fee: \$535

## **Urban Program (50,000+ population)**

The applicant city can choose to apply either under the city structure or through a stand-alone non-profit.

Annual fee: \$3,500 first 5 years / \$2,600 annually thereafter

# Upon acceptance....

**November-January:** hiring process for Main Street manager

- Board selection process
- Training for new manager and board

## **Spring:**

- Visit by the First Lady of Texas
- Texas Main Street resource team site visit/assessment and report
- Development of Baseline Main Street Plan of Work
- Initial projects

# Texas **NETWORK** today

Populations 1,900 to 300,000+

Under 5,000

24 cities

5,0001 – 20,000

29 cities

Mid-size cities to  
50,000

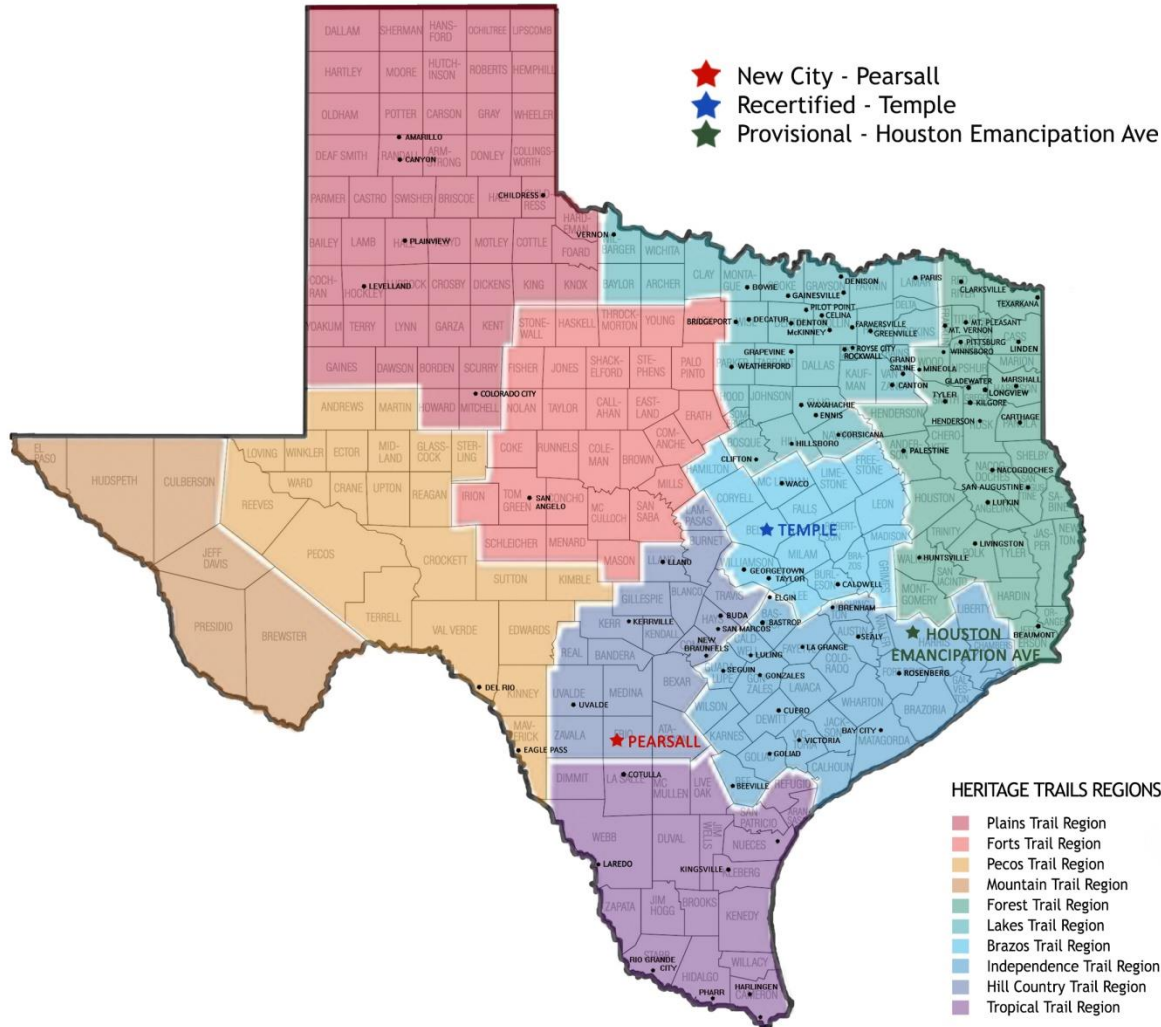
21 cities

50,000+ urban  
population

15 cities



# MAIN STREET CITIES 2018



The list of  
 official Main  
 Street  
 communities  
 can be found on  
 the “Current  
 Participants”  
 page of our  
 website